

## WOMEN IN THE DEPARTMENTS.

A Nancy Letter from Mrs. Swineholm. The Washington Chronicle publishes a sensible, very letter from Mrs. Jane G. Swineholm, on the duties of women in the public departments, which is so applicable to them and also to the sterner sex, in all relations of life, that we transfer it to our columns. After stating her claims to be heard on the grounds that she led the advance on the woman's rights question, at the time when it was unpopular to do so, she says:

The employment of women in the Government Departments is an experiment. It has not, thus far, been so complete a success as its friends could wish, and may possibly be yet pronounced a failure. The fault is chiefly, on our side of the house. Women persevere in carrying the drawing-room to the office. Unless this mistake can be corrected, the experiment must fail.

A fixed rule of good breeding excludes the shop from the parlor. A man who lugs his business, habitually, into his social hours is always a bore; and what should we think of one who goes to his counting or consulting room in the hall dress of the previous evening?

During business hours men require to be released from the restraint of the drawing-room—not certainly from the rules of good manners or good morals, but from the etiquette of society. In the social circle it is all right; they should pay all due attention to their "natural enemies," who continue to present them with the old apple of discordance; but to ask them to keep up a state of chronic admiration for tapers, mantles, glossy ringlets, bewitching smiles, and all the accessories, is a strain upon human endurance which must snap the cord.

In business hours men must "mind their own business," or the world's work will be left undone; and if the presence of women among them disturbs the even flow of thought, the women must and should get out of the way. It is painfully humiliating to any lover of the race to see American women of education holding important places in the government departments, and to see them, in the costume and manner of Parisian gigolos, let any thinker watch the troops of women stomp, stomp, or rather dump, dump, thump, thump, and down the long, stone stairways of our different departments, with their feet clattered into above us rights that all elasticity of step, grace, and the foot comes down like an old-fashioned stick leg, while the shoe, which, if large enough, would last easily six months, would burst in one; let him or her look at the spreading hoop and fastidiously decorated skirt, which invite attention to these poor, crushed and crippled feet; let him or her note the jaunty hats and "cunning" feathers; the poor hair stuffed with "rats" and "moss" and bundles of buffalo hide, which makes one sick with disgust, and then decorated with bows and spangles enough to satisfy the vanity of a brace of Quipquaws, and let him say to himself, "these women are, externally, but bad imitations of the real thing; it would certainly be better for humanity that all of this class of Government employees should starve at home than that they should corrupt public morals, and we lower the national standard of womanly delicacy by recognizing their right to fill the honorable positions many of them occupy. I know that some, perhaps a majority, of these dress thus from misapprehending the situation. They fail to see the distinction between business and social life, and so drag the drawing room with them, with its coquetry, on to the office. Two incidents, in my own office life will best illustrate my ideas of the proprieties of that life.

A brother editor, by whose desk mine had stood for nearly two years, turned to me one day with a puzzled look and asked:

"Is anything the matter with your hair?" To my answer that there was not, he replied: "Then why do you wear that thing on it?" I said it kept my hair out of the way.

"But," he said, "you know how old it makes you look? A gentleman, speaking of you but yesterday, thought you were fifty. He was surprised when I said you could not be more than thirty."

Now before that my toilette was a success. One business woman who had referred simply to the contents of the skull could never imagine its covering was intended to challenge admiration. That same true friend, upon my first entrance upon public life, sided me in a way which commanded my veneration for his memory to day and showed them a spirit ripening for a near intercourse with disembodied intelligence of that higher order to whose society he has long since gone.

It was necessary, one evening, I should remain in the office until near midnight. As I left the room, where were eight or ten editors, reporters, proof-readers and clerks, I was met by a friend, good night. A sub-editor, whose wife was my friend, got his hat, and bowing, remarked:

"Since our senior resigned his privilege, will you permit me to see you safely home?" The senior drew himself up to his full height of six feet four, and looking down at the kind little man, said sternly:

"I want to understand that Mrs. ———'s relations in this office are purely those of business, and that when she requires anything of any kind in it she will command his services. She has not commanded mine, and the fact that she has kept her servant here all the evening to attend her home should be sufficient notice to the reader to guard her from error."

This had my status. For ten years I came and went at will, and I was never in the way. The next week I found a faint understanding that they should not wear in my presence, but they forgot I was deaf, some little set of kindness was usually the apology. On one occasion, I think I seldom occurred to any of them that I was not one of them. This may appear unwomanly, but I insist that it was one of the companions of men in public employment, the idea of sex must not be the prevailing thought of their lives. They must establish "business relations," and keep them purely and entirely business relations.

Home, in speaking of Elizabeth, the greatest of England's sovereigns, says: "One must not judge her as a woman, but as a ruler. As a wife, mother, sister, daughter, let woman be just as woman; as a clerk, let her be judged as a clerk. The display of personal charms, of adornments, of dress, of grace of conversation, should be reserved for the social circle. What man of sense and delicacy could value the second best articles of this description which have been hawked around through public offices as the price of some trifling privilege, some instance of preferential treatment?"

When one takes a place in a department, she contracts to work a certain number of hours daily for a certain sum. It is understood that she is to work faithfully during those hours, and when she spends a portion of them, habitually, in reading or gossiping, or in any other way which hinders her, she is a swindler—only this, and nothing more; and the man who looks on to overlook her delinquency is an accomplice in the delinquency. He is her best friend who holds her up sternly to the fulfillment of her contract.

Nor should the sickness, brought on by folly, be any excuse for a failure to fulfill the contract. The headaches and backaches and dyspepsias and endless miseries brought on by impudently indulged in pleasures of the flesh, and the colds and chills and catarrhs caught from half clad feet and arms and shoulders, should be no apology for unfulfilled or half done work.

Women as well as men are under moral obligations to "use all lawful endeavors to preserve their own lives and the lives of others," and their failure to do so is an evidence of their failure to perform any other duty. That direct result of improper dress, is a fact patent to all thinking physicians, and until women can make up their minds to study the laws of health rather than that of fashion, their demand for equality in employment, and salary, is simply ridiculous.

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**taining a Treatise on Self Abuse,**

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**This work is not a quick advertisement, but a warning**

**and a guide for married and single. It is the only book**

**that gives the treatment of all the above diseases in plain**

**English, with full directions for self-treatment, and con-**

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**limited extent, producing with unerring certainty the**

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**the ears, and noise like the rustling of leaves and rat-**

**tling of chariot, uneasiness about the loins, weakness of**

**the limbs, confusion of vision, limited intellectual con-**

**science, diffidence in approaching strangers, a dislike**

**to form new acquaintances, a disposition to shun society,**

**loss of memory, hectic flushes, pimples and various eruptions**

**about the face, furrowed tongue, night sweats, field**

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**brated "Wilkins Tract" alone, are ample basis**

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**are SEVEN WELLS now in successful opera-**

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**GUARANTEE that this Company will soon be able to**

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**for any and all persons to hold.**

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**Relief and Health to your Infants.**

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**The following is an extract from a letter written by**

**the Rev. E. Z. Weller, to the German Reformed Mes-**

**senger, at Chambersburg, Pa.:**

**A BENEFACTRESS.**

**There is a woman in the public eye whose name has**

**been long associated in our mind with the "Fam-**

**ous" "Quick" and "Oiling" with so no longer,**

**and we desire to treat her name from all such misap-**

**plications. She is a woman of noble mind, and we**

**will all admit that woman alone is the Nurse—the good**

**Nurse—this is a fact. She is the most successful phy-**

**sician and not, it is a question which must be decided**

**by time and principle, and not a matter of taste. Pride,**

**prejudice, caprice and custom may as well behave them-**

**selves, for if there is really a want, there will also be a**

**supply. If there is a "calling," there will be a coming.**

**Nature and human society are always self-supplying,**

**and thought and Action may hinder, they cannot**

**prevent.</**